

What is claimed is:

1. A sign comprising:

a light diffusion layer having front and back faces;

means for lighting disposed on or in close proximity to said light diffusion layer; and

a masking layer covering at least a portion of the front face of the light diffusion layer and defining at least one character or symbol of said sign.

2. The sign of claim 1 wherein said means for lighting comprises a plurality of light emitting diodes wherein each light emitting diode is at least partially disposed within said light diffusion layer.

3. The sign of claim 1 further comprising a reflective layer disposed between the front face of the diffusion layer and a rear face of the masking layer, wherein said reflective layer covers at least a portion of the front face of the diffusion layer.

4. The sign of claim 1 further comprising a reflective layer covering at least a portion of the back face of the diffusion layer.

5. The sign of claim 1 further comprising:

a first reflective layer disposed between the front face of the diffusion layer and a rear face of the masking layer, wherein said first reflective layer covers at least a portion of the front face of the diffusion layer; and

a second reflective layer covering at least a portion of the back face of the diffusion layer.

6. The sign of claim 1 wherein said masking layer is opaque.

7. A sign having at least one character or symbol wherein each character or symbol comprises:

a light diffusion layer having front and back faces, wherein said light diffusion layer defines a plurality of cavities;

a plurality of light emitting members wherein each light emitting member is at least partially disposed within one of said plurality of cavities; and

a masking layer covering at least a portion of the front face of the light diffusion layer.

8. The sign of claim 7 further comprising a reflective layer disposed between the front face of the diffusion layer and a rear face of the masking layer, wherein said reflective layer covers at least a portion of the front face of the diffusion layer.

9. The sign of claim 7 further comprising a reflective layer covering at least a portion of the back face of the diffusion layer.

10. The sign of claim 7 further comprising:

a first reflective layer disposed between the front face of the diffusion layer and a rear face of the masking layer, wherein said first reflective layer covers at least a portion of the front face of the diffusion layer; and

a second reflective layer covering at least a portion of the back face of the diffusion layer.

11. The sign of claim 7 wherein a light dispersion angle of each light emitting member ranges from about 30° to about 180°.

12. The sign of claim 7 wherein a light dispersion angle of each light emitting member ranges from about 70° to about 120°.

13. The sign of claim 7 wherein a longitudinal axis of each cavity is oriented substantially perpendicular to the back face of the light diffusion layer.

14. The sign of claim 7 wherein a longitudinal axis of each cavity is oriented substantially parallel to the back face of the light diffusion layer.

15. The sign of claim 7 wherein the diffusion layer forms a border around at least a portion of a perimeter of said masking layer.

16. The sign of claim 7 wherein said masking layer has substantially the same shape as the diffusion layer but of smaller dimensions so that the diffusion layer forms a border around substantially the entire perimeter of said masking layer.

17. The sign of claim 16 wherein said border is of a uniform width.

18. The sign of claim 16 wherein said border is not of a uniform width.

19. The sign of claim 7 wherein each light emitting member comprises a light emitting diode.

20. The sign of claim 7 wherein said light diffusion layer comprises, at least in part, an acrylic material.

21. The sign of claim 7 wherein said light diffusion layer comprises an acrylic matrix material having particles dispersed therein.

22. The sign of claim 21 wherein said particles reflect light.

23. The sign of claim 7 wherein said light diffusion layer comprises, at least in part, a fluorescent material.

24. The sign of claim 7 further comprising a battery for supplying electrical power to each light emitting member.

25. The sign of claim 24 further comprising means for donning said sign.

26. A sign having at least one character or symbol wherein each character or symbol comprises:

a light diffusion layer having front and back faces, wherein said light diffusion layer defines a plurality of cavities and a longitudinal axis of each cavity is oriented substantially perpendicular to the back face of the light diffusion layer;

a plurality of light emitting members wherein each light emitting member is at least partially disposed within one of said plurality of cavities;

an opaque masking layer covering at least a portion of the front face of the light diffusion layer;

a first reflective layer disposed between the front face of the diffusion layer and a rear face of the opaque masking layer, wherein said first reflective layer covers at least a portion of the front face of the diffusion layer; and

a second reflective layer covering at least a portion of the back face of the diffusion layer.

27. A sign comprising:

a light diffusion layer having front and back faces wherein said front face defines at least one character or symbol in raised relief with respect to a substantially planar portion of said front face;

means for lighting disposed on or in close proximity to said light diffusion layer; and

an masking layer covering at least part of the substantially planar portion of said front face of the light diffusion layer.

28. The sign of claim 27 further comprising a battery for supplying electrical power to said means for lighting.

29. The sign of claim 28 further comprising a means for donning said sign.

30. The sign of claim 27 wherein said means for lighting comprises a plurality of light emitting diodes wherein each light emitting diode is at least partially disposed within said light diffusion layer.

31. The sign of claim 27 wherein said masking layer is opaque.